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LITERARY BEGINNERS.

AMONG the many graces to which cultivated minds aspire, there is none which is perhaps so much the object of general ambition as the grace of literary excellence. Almost every educated person, at some period of life, makes certain advances in this direction. These attempts are generally begun in the earlier years, and as a rule they end there. Now and again cases are met with where the pursuit is persisted in long after it is apparent to every one but the man himself that he is not qualified to excel in this particular branch of culture; but these cases are happily exceptional. That they are not more numerous, is due to the fact that good writing, like good acting, cannot be simulated. A man may earn the character of a scholar, even if he have but little Latin and less Greek, so long as he does not openly put his acquisitions to too severe a strain. But he cannot hoodwink people as to his real merits if he attempt to play the part of Hamlet with a supply of histrionic power which is barely sufficient for that of Polonius; neither may he by any possibility pass as a great writer unless he can actually write well. The virtue of good writing is one which it is not in the power of a man to 'assume,' if he have it not.

At the same time, it is within the capacity of a large number of persons to attain to a very fair and marketable degree of literary excellence, as is evidenced by the thousands who in this country earn a livelihood, or eke out an otherwise insufficient income, by the use of the pen. And this army of writers is one that is growing, and likely to grow; the demand for literary workmanship of various degrees of excellence being increasingly maintained by the great number of magazines, journals, newspapers, and other kinds of periodical literature, that afford to these writers at once a medium of publication and a source of income. Those persons therefore who have but newly engaged, or who meditate engaging in this work, will find some encouragement and a good deal of instruction in a book entitled

Journals and Journalism (London: Field and Tuer), written by an author who adopts the pseudonym of 'John Oldecastle.'

This book does not profess to treat of Journals or Journalism beyond what is necessary to constitute a fair claim to its sub-title of 'A Guide to Literary Beginners.' And to this class it will be useful. They here receive instruction, presumably based upon a considerable experience, as to how to prepare and despatch their manuscripts; how to correct their proofs—should their productions reach that happy stage; and in what spirit to receive their manuscripts back, should these, as is at first not unlikely, be returned to them 'with the editor's thanks.' This latter is to most young writers a bitter experience, and the bitterness is intensified if the writer never gets a manuscript accepted at all, and is at last driven to try some other channel than literature for the utilisation of his, or her, intellectual vigour. Even writers who are in the end accepted, and whose productions may afterwards become of some esteem in the world of letters, are not exempted from renewals of this experience. Editors and publishers are dainty creatures, and will not bite indiscriminately at any lure; and the author never lived who did not fail sometimes.

For the consolation of those to whom this experience has been perhaps more familiar than they probably thought either desirable or wholesome, our author has gathered together many encouraging examples of men ultimately successful, and eminently so, who were for years persistently 'rejected' at the publishing and editorial portals. For instance, there is our greatest living man of letters, Thomas Carlyle, who could not get any publisher to accept his *Sartor Resartus*, and was glad in the end to have it appear piecemeal in the pages of a magazine, greatly to the disgust of some of its readers. Mrs Henry Wood, before she produced *East Lynne*, had a drawerful of tales which had been 'returned with thanks' from all directions. Even Macaulay, all-knowing and immaculate as he appears in his printed works, is said to have written not a little

which came back to him from publishers 'declined with thanks.' Anthony Trollope was frequently rejected; so was that once-formidable personage, Henry Brougham; and so was that distinguished novelist, the late George Eliot.

We are, however, afraid that 'John Oldcastle' somewhat errs on the side of encouragement, and that his book may induce a rush of young competitors for literary distinction whose capability is not at all commensurate with their ambition. It is one of the traditions of *Chambers's Journal* that it has ever given fair and full consideration to young writers, and has been the means of introducing not a few successful authors to the world of letters; yet it would be a source of regret were the instances given in this book, of perseverance ultimately rewarded, to lead aspirants to go away with the idea that it is an easy thing to scale the higher citadels of literature. And in giving this caution, it may not be amiss to point out one or two of the misconceptions by which many literary beginners are led astray at the very outset of their career. In doing so, we assume that the persons so advised possess the literary faculty in some degree; otherwise, no advice is of any use.

The first and most prevalent misconception of tyros is, that an article or a poem, to be brilliant, must be 'dashed off.' They have heard, of course, that Johnson wrote *Rasselas* in a week; that Byron was only thirteen days over *The Corsair*; that Scott was scarcely double that time in writing a volume of *Waverley*; and that Burns composed *Tam o' Shanter* between dinner and tea. But they forget that before these tasks were accomplished, Johnson had composed and published what would fill volumes; Byron had already spent the best of his years in the constant practice of his pen; Scott had edited the Border ballads, the works of Swift and Dryden, and written the greatest of his poems; and that Burns was as expert and practised in verse-making as a long experience in the art could possibly make even him. Apart altogether from the question of the super-eminent genius of all these men, they did not attain to this degree of literary celerity all at once. They did not jump into it as a man may get into a suit of new clothes. It was in each case the result of the unwearied practice of their art. There have been instances, such as that of the poet Campbell, where the genius ripened early, and where the first work was the best; but this is very rare even in the ranks of genius. The rule in these ranks has rather been on the side of unmitigated labour in correcting and perfecting their compositions. Many of them, such as Gibbon, wrote and rewrote the first of their productions three or four times over; and after all, when they saw their work in print, have been known to declare that they thought they could still improve it were they to write it over yet again! It may be taken therefore as a fundamental rule in the attainment of literary excellence, to spare no labour in perfecting and polishing, and to leave no word, or

sentence, or passage unimproved that still seems to admit of improvement. Attention to this would save many a young writer some of his bitterest disappointments.

Another fertile source of literary shipwreck to young writers is their aversion to submit their compositions to the amending hands of experienced and therefore competent persons. They are naturally partial to their own productions. They have resolved to set up at once for a genius, and have they not read that every word of genius is a treasure not to be touched by the hands of the prosaically profane? If the privilege of the hero in the fairy tale were theirs, and they had only to wish, in order to possess the thing wished for, no doubt we would have genius in plenty; but it so happens that the exquisite combination of intellectual faculties so named is a very rare possession among men. It is safer to begin life with a humble idea of our genius. If genius be ours, it will not be long in showing itself. We do not mean by this to disenchant altogether the young writer: this would be cruelly, as half his incentive and the most of his pleasure may lie in this same pleasing delusion; but we would have him trust rather to industry than to impulse for the success of his earlier efforts.

There are few even among the most talented writers who have not at some time or other been subject to supervision, and this not unfrequently at the hands of men much less gifted than themselves, but richer in experience. The mechanical part of the art can only be perfected by practice. We may not all be capable of running a mile in five minutes and jumping as many hurdles by the way; but even the racer who does this must first have learned to walk before he could so run. It is the same with the generality of writers. Nor have the acknowledged sons of genius disdained such helps. 'Addison,' says Pope, 'wrote very fluently; but he was sometimes very slow and scrupulous in correcting. He would show his verses to several friends; and would alter almost everything that any of them hinted at as wrong.' Burns was not beyond taking a hint from Johnson the Edinburgh music-editor as to the phraseology and rhythmical structure of his songs. Scott submitted his earlier ballads to the correcting hand of that very small man Mat Lewis, and sad work the Monk made of them. On the other hand, some of the best of his novels were considerably improved in point of composition by the verbal criticisms of his publisher James Ballantyne. Byron, even in his best days, did not hesitate to rewrite a whole act of *Manfred* because his publisher's 'taster' did not like it in its first form; Dickens publicly acknowledged his indebtedness to the printers' reader for saving him from many serious blunders; and Thomas Carlyle was content to have his first articles hacked and cut at by Jeffrey till he scarcely knew his own when he saw it in print. If great and experienced writers, therefore, were not averse to such supervision, why should small ones—at least, let us say young ones—be so? The truth is, one of the most hopeful signs in a

young writer is his ability to submit to the correcting hand of those who, even though he may think them of less brilliant parts, are possessed of more cultured tastes than himself. It is within our own experience that those young writers who receive correction least graciously are as a rule the least capable.

Still another source of failure to the literary aspirant, is his inability or unwillingness to accommodate the style of his contribution to that of the magazine or journal to which he proposes to send it. Many declinations are traceable, not so much to defective composition or literary poverty, as to the inappropriateness of the subject, or the objectionable manner in which it is treated. It is a hopeful indication of success when a contributor can grasp the spirit and purpose of the publication in which he is emulous of appearing, and at once writes up to it. Without the necessary literary insight to discriminate in this matter, it would be impossible for those who make a profession of journalism, or who earn a livelihood by miscellaneous contributions to magazines, to frame their productions in conformity with this the first and foremost of editorial requirements. It is clear that when an editor opens a manuscript and finds that the heading of it indicates a subject obviously inappropriate for his purposes, he will go no further into it. On the other hand, if the subject be such as comes within the scope or design of his publication, the young writer has at least made one step in his progress good, for his paper—unless the editor has previously accepted a similar article from another hand—will then be considered on its merits. Of course, when a writer has been sufficiently tested and approved, and has reached the honour of a place on the staff of contributors which most magazines in course of time gather round them, this difficulty is less felt, as then he has his work frequently allocated to him by the editor, subject and all. But young writers cannot get into this position in a day or a year, if ever; and meantime therefore they must set down this question of fitness as among the considerations that are necessary on their part if they would hope to appear in print in the quarter towards which their ambition points.

The conditions of literary effort are in these days very different from what they formerly were. Within the present century, journalism has risen from something like a pastime into the dignity of a profession. Out of the unregulated amorphism of its incipient stages, it has developed into a highly organised existence. From an incongruous horde of literary nomads, whose movements tended nowhere and everywhere, it has been concentrated into the drilled and disciplined order of an army, with companies and regiments each under its own colours, and trained to the use of its own particular weapons. And the individual has changed with the organisation. Every man does not now set up for a captain, though any private with the necessary ability may hope to be one. As was said of the proverbial French soldier, so may every private in the regiments of literature carry a marshal's baton in his knapsack. In this army, also, there can in the nature of things be no promotion by purchase; nothing is to be hoped for under any system of exchange; promotion by merit is here the only admissible tenet of law and practice. Literary labour is now more than ever

in the position of earning its money's worth; and although the reward may not always be proportioned to the effort, that is a contingency which is not incidental to this department of labour only, but holds equally of all branches of human industry and application.

To one, therefore, who possesses any fair degree of literary skill, there are in our day many avenues open, if not to distinction or affluence, at least to a respectable competency. But like all other attainments, it can only be acquired by hard work and persistent effort. Byron's story about his waking one morning and finding himself famous, is apt to take unprofitable possession of too many young heads, of whom it is no more likely to be true than it was of Byron himself. With all his undoubted genius, united to the advantages of his birth and station, he did not burst like a meteor at once into distinction; but worked on for long with no more encouragement than Brougham awarded him for his *Hours of Idleness*. And even after he had risen to the summit of poetical fame in his day, any one who compares his drafts with his finished productions, will see what a patient, plodding craftsman he was, scrupulously fastidious as to his phraseology, in the amending and correcting of which he spared no pains. In these corrections, moreover, he exhibited what is always a distinct proof of literary skill and cultured taste, in so far as he seldom made a change which was not also an improvement. To the young literary aspirant, therefore, we would say, Write carefully, and at leisure; do not fall into the stupid conceit of 'dashing things off'; have no aversion to your faults being pointed out, but beware, on the other hand, of the exuberant praise bestowed upon your manuscript by interested relatives; and once your work is honestly done, and neatly written out, do your best to find a likely channel of publication for it. If not at first successful, you may be in the long-run; and if not with one piece, lay it aside, and try another.

An Editor is frequently blamed if he do not immediately return an ineligible paper, and is regarded as unkind or even harsh if he fails to point out the faults of the unfortunate manuscript; but a little reflection will show how unreasonable it is to expect that that hard-worked personage can have time to criticise, for the benefit of any tyro who may ask, the imperfections of that tyro's work. Nor can an Editor possibly peruse and judge of the merits or otherwise of a multiplicity of manuscripts immediately upon their reception. Days—even a week or two may elapse before he can give them the necessary attention.

Contributors would be more patient regarding their papers if they only knew how earnestly a conscientious Editor labours to throw into shape an imperfectly written article or tale; nor would they wonder at their offerings being so frequently abridged, if they knew how many papers were constantly struggling for a place. 'Deal small and serve all,' is one of the Editor's necessary maxims.

There are various minor, but nevertheless important points, which it would be well for literary aspirants to observe, but which we regret to say are too often neglected. The caligraphy should be clear, and the page should not be crowded with lines; otherwise, a manuscript which may contain really meritorious matter runs the risk of

being returned unread. Manuscript should be written on one side of the leaf only, and at the end or at the beginning the author's full Christian name, surname, and address should be given. The neglect of this latter precaution, as well as the omitting to include stamps for re-postage of ineligible material, occasions the loss, or necessitates the consignment to the waste-basket, of many a manuscript.

Letters of recommendation from the tyro's friends, or even from men of eminence in the literary world, are of no use whatever if the matter offered fails to commend itself to the Editor. His duty is to cater for a public who *must* be satisfied that what is periodically offered to it, suits its taste. Nor can the Editor who would hold together his *clientèle* of readers, admit the offerings of even the widow or orphan, unless they pass the tribunal of his judgment—a cruel duty doubtless, but one which the stern exigencies of his position necessitate.

THE FORTUNES OF BERTRAM OAKLEY.

CHAPTER VII.—LAUNCHED IN LONDON.

It is with some pain, ever and always, that we tear ourselves away from a place where we have lived long enough to allow the tenacious home associations to take root. Even a prison can to some exceptional natures become dear by long usage; and although a ship has been not inaptly compared to a floating jail, many a tough old naval officer has been known to lament the joyous years when he was cabined, cribbed, confined in some contracted den on board a space-saving corvette or pinched gunboat. Of the Denham family, the one who left Blackston with the most regret was certainly Louisa, the doctor's eldest daughter. Pretty Rose, her young sister, was of an age at which change and bustle and novelty are welcome for their own sake, and when Fancy paints in glowing hues the radiant to-morrow that Hope keeps in store. And the doctor, his mind once made up, felt as sanguine as the veriest schoolboy as to the ultimate results of his fresh start in life.

To Bertram Oakley the change was a glad one. He was not, as many of his former fellow-workers had been prone, with local vanity, to boast themselves, 'Blackston born,' and had few pleasant memories of the hard, grinding, unlovely Woolopolis of the West. He was now about to make his first real upward step in the world, of which he had read so much and seen so little; and never, in the old semi-mythical days of chivalry, did a young knight buckle on the golden spurs and knightly baldric with a purer and more steadfast resolve to do his best to deserve them, than that which swelled the beating heart of this young civil engineer expectant. The days of 'derring-do' are done. Slowly but surely, wealth, science, and the invention of gunpowder—the Grave of Valour, as old Germanic champions called it at the first—have turned the grim game of War into an elaborate match of patient calculation, the victory in which is to the longest head and the longest purse. Such lads as Bertram might once have seen few rewards to aim at but such as fell to the best lance of the old spear-breaking times. Now, our best triumphs are gained over the bridled forces of Nature.

The migration to London was accomplished with the smooth swiftness which the magician Steam puts at the command of us all, and which makes us half incredulous of the hardships of that time—not so very long ago—when Royal Anne and her drowsy consort Prince George of Denmark spent six hours in their begilded coach, during the painful transit along five clayey miles of stubborn Sussex road. Indeed, there seems now to be something ludicrously disproportionate between the thought, the hesitation, the doubts and fears, which a change of residence entails, and the rapid ease with which the actual flitting is conducted. Bertram, for one, eyed with but scanty interest the leagues of green country through which the train hurried on, rich as it was in storied nooks where memorable lives had been led or great deeds done, so eager was he to catch the first glimpse of the mighty city that lay beyond. Had his reading been more extensive and his hopes less high, he might have looked more lingeringly on this or that small red-roofed town, topped by a gray stern Norman belfry that had seen cruel civil strife, and flaunting pageants and pitiless executions, since the day when the masons completed their work. Or the shattered ruins of a chancel standing drear and lone, the broken pillars of a roofless aisle, a great rose-window showing its glassless tracery of stone, might have told him tales of a stately Abbey in its picturesque decay. As it was, he longed for London.

London reached at last! There it was, the canopy of smoke and winter-fog and shapeless blackness, overhanging the world's greatest of great cities. There it was, with its surging roar of mingled sounds, its disheartening immensity, and the unreasonable feeling of loneliness which is apt to be forced upon a sensitive stranger by his very neighbourhood to such a multitudinous anthill of busy beings as that to which he has come to bring his poor tribute of aspirations, and a life. Bertram could not help being a little disappointed, a little discouraged too, during the first hour or so in London. It seemed to him as if his were so small a venture among the many argosies afloat on such a sea, as if his brighter faculties were benumbed by the very heedlessness of the units who composed those great streams of life that poured like the very lifeblood of stirring civilisation through the echoing streets, each atom of the heaving mass intent upon his or her small gain of profit, pleasure, duty, all sublimely careless of the terrors and the longings, the eagerness, despair, stricken woe, that jostled against them in human presentment on the flagstones.

Once in London—once beside the platform on which delft corduroy-clad porters—skilled physiognomists in that branch of Lavater's science which consists in discriminating between the fee-giving and non-fee-giving varieties of modern travellers—were wheeling empty trucks; and beyond which Hansoms and four-wheeled 'crawlers' were drawn up in line, expectant of their human prey—the caravan of West-country passengers that the panting steam-horse had swept so swiftly on along the sleepered road, broke up rapidly into its component parts. Even the Denham family, using the word in its amplest signification, separated on that railway platform, which has witnessed partings almost as painful, and often as final, as those which the scaffold itself has seen—husband

and wife, mother and son, brother and sister, saying the tearful words that should never be again uttered on this side of the grave. Off then drove the doctor, with his daughters and the boy he had taken by the hand, to their new abode in Harley Street; while a hired brougham, duly bespoken—for Mr Walter Denham was careful of his health, and never risked a draught—conveyed the *virtuoso* home.

Uncle Walter had a pretty house in the royal suburb of Kensington; but there are Kensingtons and Kensingtons, just as Belgravia is an elastic term that covers many a slack-baked street of insolvent stucco; and the shrewd *virtuoso* had contrived to establish his artistic Laras and Penates in the sunniest and most central nook between the angle of the Park and that great permanent Exhibition, that tantalises Londoners by being so near and yet so far, and where some of the choicest gems of our national treasury lie hid. It was in Prince's Terrace that Uncle Walter's mellow red-brick house, with the white stone mullions of its Queen Anne windows, showed its tempting front, like a ripe peach in the sunshine; while within were rare marbles and bronzes, marvellous intaglios and fragments of ancient mosaic, pictures, urns, arms, medallions, all the *bric-à-brac* that can be picked up by an indefatigable explorer of the darkling curiosity-shops of decaying towns abroad. Here, among his statues, his Greuzes and Hobbimas, his blue china and antique etchings, and sword-blades from Damascus and Toledo, dwelt Uncle Walter; and hither the hired brougham in due course conveyed him.

The Harley Street house wherein Sir Samuel Jeffs had dwelt was large and roomy, larger by far than that provincial dwelling in Regent Square, Blackston, which had been 'home' even yesterday; but it seemed cold, gloomy, and sepulchral, and with its big rooms and grand staircase and dimly lighted windows, exercised rather a depressing effect at the first upon its new inhabitants. It had been the abode of generations of wealthy people; and on some of the ceilings, florid mythology displayed the most garish colours and clumsiest attitudes of an eighteenth century Olympus. The stone staircase was more like that of an Italian house than a London one. There were yet, on each side of the wide front-door, the quaint extinguishers of rusty iron wherewith the running footmen of past ages quenched the not unnecessary flambeaux with which they lighted their masters through the muddy and ill-kept streets. Before those steps, many a grand carriage had set down its living load. Into that hall, many a sedan-chair had been carried, freighted with beauties in paint and patches, with impossible headgear and high-heeled shoes. Dean Swift himself may have trudged, scowling, and Laurence Sterne tripped, smirking, up that stair.

'We shall shake into our places, and soon—all of us, feel at home,' was Dr Denham's cheery dictum, as he clapped his hand encouragingly on Bertram Oakley's shoulder; while the latter busied himself with the supervision of the luggage, as it was brought in, piecemeal, through the fog and waning light, from without. Dr Denham was in excellent spirits, in wilfully good spirits, if it be permissible to use such a word. He knew the practice he had bought to be a good one. Sir Samuel's name was one which was never breathed

but with respect, and the field lay open for a successor of his recommending. The fashion of Harley Street is as dead as the Druids, but there is much of substantial wealth yet in the district. Altogether, the honest doctor felt as though he were proprietor of a gold mine, and had but to work as his wont was, to secure the precious ore beneath.

(To be continued.)

A NOVEL PET.

WHAT English homestead would be complete without its Pet? an epithet applicable alike to bird, cat, dog, or baby. Most have some kind of pet. It is human, it is natural to have something on which to lavish our best affection. At home we had a diversity of pets; but the one I wish to speak of was, I consider, a Novel Pet, in so far as it is not customary to keep an animal of its *genus* as an inmate of a domestic circle. Our pet was a kangaroo. She—one of the gentler sex, and well deserving was she of that honour—was a splendid specimen of her kind. I have seen many both since and before at the Zoo, and elsewhere; but never have I met with such a one as ours. Had she been reinstated amongst her own kin, doubtless she would have been considered a beauty, if somewhat dainty and precise. Standing erect upon her hind-limbs, she looked the perfection of dignity, and would measure at least five feet. But her usual attitude was a graceful curve of the spine, which considerably diminished the height, but lent ease and rapidity to her motions. Her skin was soft and glossy; her head small, with long sharp-pointed ears that evidenced delicate breed, and large soft hazel eyes; a long, strong tail, which served both as a vehicle by which she was wont to express any intense emotion, and a weapon wherewith to resent insult or ungenerosity; and two fore-limbs or short arms, which were of the same use and value to her as are those of her higher evolved sisters of the human species (*vide* Mr Darwin). With these fore-paws she would, monkey-wise, grasp and retain anything offered to her. Her food she preferred to take from the dish, and in this wise transfer to her mouth, in contrast to the ruder manner of her fellow-diners—three fat and—must it be told?—greedy cats. They invariably assembled at meal-times—this quartet—and great was the angry growling of the feline brethren should Kanny be first to extract from the dish a morsel of the edibles. She was a bit of an epicure in her way. Her *bonne-bouche* was a rabbit-bone—the more fleshy the better—which she would take in her right paw and pick cleanly, and with infinite relish.

The cats were rather awed by her at first. They set their backs up and their ears down; their tails grew thick and stiff. But they soon came to be accustomed to their new companion. No doubt they thought her odd; but that thought was chased away in the more practical occupation of staying the pangs of animal appetite. Likewise, we children, and indeed our elders also, were more than a trifle scared at first. Kanny was a formidable creature to meet unexpectedly, as I did one day when returning with nurse from a walk. She came bounding down the stairs, taking a whole flight at a time, and the length of the hall in about four leaps. She was not such a fine

animal at that time. Most probably, she had not had the same care and kindness bestowed upon her on board the vessel that brought her from her southern home, as she had subsequently. Of tea she was exceedingly fond, and she deemed it a grievous slight if we omitted to insert a full complement of sugar. Had we served it without milk, she would have lashed her tail, then drawn up her tall figure in angry indignation, and with a bound or two of extra magnitude, occasioned by the force of exasperation, permit distance to separate the offended and the offender. But each and all loved her, and looked to her comforts too well for that. Not a luxury but Kanny must share; not a 'penn'orth o' sweets' but Kanny must partake of—her particular fancy in this line leaning to sugared almonds. Kanny had a very sweet tooth.

By-and-by we children developed a vague consciousness of something in the shape of mystery going on, or about to take place. This we gleaned from side-looks and whispers, and our inquisitive young minds were sorely perplexed. But in course of time this dim expectancy was rendered more substantial, more real. Kanny had a baby—a baby kangaroo! Oh, how our childish hearts did expand to take in every iota of that wondrous phenomenon! A baby kangaroo born beneath our own roof—the roof of an outhouse made cosy and comfortable upon the arrival of the mother. Well, it was all the same! No real baby could have been a greater prodigy—a greater beauty, notwithstanding its lean, lank body, long disproportionate limbs, and the general *looseness* of its physical proportions. Nevertheless, baby kanny was a treasure. Though it was our dearest delight to seek to entice the interesting bantling from her abode of warmth and safety in her mother's pouch, no human mother could have tended her infant more constantly than did our Kanny. But, alas! it was not for long. Ere many weeks had passed, the autumn winds blew bleak—too bleak for the child of the south. Our pet's baby, always weakly, timid, fragile, sickened and died.

No longer were our childish hearts excited at the vision of a pair of dark eyes and two little skinny paws peeping out of the mother's pouch. We missed our little pet much, and we mourned her in a way. But as for the mother, if she grieved, we were delighted that she survived her grief, and—selfish mortals that we are—we were amply recompensed for our loss by the attention she could again bestow upon us.

Our garden was a good length, and surrounded by brick walls of some seven feet or more. To take these walls at a leap was an easy feat to Kanny; and highly amusing was it to see her help herself without invitation to the bunches of currants or cherries—taking wise precaution as to the stones—from the bushes and trees, which fruit we children were cautioned not to pluck without permission. It was hard; it was tantalising perhaps; but it was amusing—and pardonable, as the delinquent was our pet Kanny.

Another amusing incident occurred when some workmen were engaged in a neighbour's garden. A long lane ran parallel with the ends of the gardens of our terrace, and from each garden a door led into this lane. Our neighbour's door having fallen into dilapidation, they were getting a new one in its place—the carpenter and others

being busy at it. When strangers were about, it was our custom to keep Kanny confined to her own domestic quarters; but somehow or other it happened that this particular day, shortly before noon, some considerate friend had released her from her temporary imprisonment, and she was free to go whithersoever she desired. After reveling in the freedom which the garden afforded, possibly her long-pent energies provoked an ardent yearning for a wider range, now that that sweetest of all sweet boons was her own. Be that as it may, she was pleased to 'take' the wall; and then, with her habitual light step, she bounded along the lane in the direction whence sounds of knocking alternating with human voices fell upon her keenly sensitive ear. In this way she gained the doorway where the men were going on with their work. Then, gracefully and with becoming dignity, drawing herself up to her full height, she confronted the men with an intelligent and unabashed stare. The men were at first amazed—then terrified almost out of their wits. One by one dropped his tools and ran as fast as his legs would carry him. In less time than it takes to tell, all had fled, leaving their work and their *beer* behind them; and Kanny became mistress of the situation. In nowise discomposed or seemingly discouraged by this most precipitate retreat, Kanny was not slow to improve the opportunity. The pewter pots remained; some were still little less than half emptied. Kanny had tasted beer before, though not often. But one sniff was sufficient—it was good! Kanny tasted it—it was better. Pot after pot was emptied until not a drop remained; and the lawluf imbibers had the satisfaction of beholding from a window a formidable and unknown animal placidly yet surely making smaller by degrees and beautifully less the delectable contents of those pewter pots! Many there have been, and still are, who would without ceremony 'rob a poor man of his beer;' but upon no previous occasion, probably, has the British workman been rendered beerless by a kangaroo.

Truly, these big and doubtless proportionately brave fellows were terribly scared, and little wonder, seeing that it was the first time they had encountered such an animal under such circumstances. It required all the persuasive eloquence of our cook, who stood in the background an amused spectator, to prevail upon them to leave their refuge in order to resume work, which could only be achieved upon the repeated and solemn assurance that the creature—and according to the workmen, the something infinitely worse—was in safe custody elsewhere.

Winter was approaching, and the cold, spite of all our efforts to the contrary, affected poor Kanny much. She became subject to fainting-fits, preceded by shiverings, when she would turn up her big brown eyes so soft, so full of beseeching pity, that our hearts were touched to the core. It was pitiable to see her. Her sufferings, alas, increased! We provided as well as we could for her comfort and relief; but it availed not, and day by day we watched her grow less active, less inclined to frolic and play, as she became weaker and more subject to these attacks. She would lie down now, content to have a caressing hand at intervals laid upon her, when, in answer, she would endeavour to raise her pretty,

symmetrical head, and rub the hand in token of her gratitude and love. This was all she could do; and there came a time when even this was too much.

One raw December day, she was carried in from her house and placed on the rug before the kitchen-fire, panting and gasping for breath; and in a short time thereafter our pet was dead! We made her a grave in the garden, wherein rest the remains of many other but not more dearly cherished pets; and for years that spot, to my childish understanding at least, was consecrated by the memory of one who had been our dear and faithful friend. Even now I love all recollections of our Kanny.

A STRANGE RETRIBUTION.

CHAPTER VI.—THE PROMISE KEPT.

YEARS again passed by, during which I had neither heard of Stockdale, nor revisited my old home. Time, which softens all sorrows, had taken away the sharpness of mine. I had not indeed forgotten Fairy, and I had remained unmarried. But of Stockdale I hardly ever had a thought now. Twenty years had passed since the events mentioned in the last chapter, and almost as many since I had been in Liverpool. It was an evening in the month of May when, after so long an absence, I once more found myself in that busy town. I supposed that I should certainly be forgotten at the *Neptune*, if indeed that hotel should still be in existence; but I wished to see the place again, and so made my way towards my old quarters. It was with some curiosity that I turned into the little court where the inn used to be. It was there still, apparently unchanged, and I entered. Of course, I was not recognised; but when I mentioned my name, and said that I used to be well known at the *Neptune*, I found that the name at least was remembered, and that there was an apartment still called Captain Rivers' Room. To a wanderer such as I had been, without relative or home, this was some satisfaction; and I asked to be allowed again to occupy my own room.

And so that night I found myself sitting by the fireside, as I had done nearly a quarter of a century before. Everything in the room was just as I had last seen it. There was no change in the furniture. The same massive mahogany bedstead with its crimson curtains was there; the same table at which I had written my letter to poor Fairy. The arm-chair I was sitting in was the very one in which I had so often sat and thought of her. Opposite me was the old oak cabinet; and I am half-ashamed to confess that I actually went over to it and opened the right-hand drawer, and looked in with a kind of feeling that I should find a letter for me in it. There was none of course. But as I sat in the old place by the fireside that night, memories of the past crowded thick upon me, incidents long forgotten returned vividly to my mind. I thought of my old home; of Mrs Pearson, and my promise to her; of Fairy—of my last interview with her; of the lonely grave on the wild moorland; until I observed that the fire had gone out, and that it was far on in the night. Then I went to bed, and fell asleep. But still my thoughts were busy with

the past. I seemed in my dreams to pass again through the scenes of my childhood and youth. But one strange feature was present in them all. I was a boy playing with Fairy. We were full of mirth, the garden ringing with our laughter, when suddenly a servant appeared calling us in. It was Dorothy Brien, the old servant of the Stockdales. The scene changed. I was returning to Rathminster after my first voyage, anxious to see Fairy again, and feeling a pleasure in coming home—never perhaps so sweet and unmixed as in youth, and after a first absence. I knocked at the door. 'Fairy will surely open it,' I thought. But no. It was Dorothy. 'There is sickness in this house,' she said; 'you cannot enter.' So my dream went on, one scene succeeding another, and with each this old servant was strangely mixed up. I thought I was returning from my poor darling's funeral. At a turn of the road, the same woman suddenly met me. 'Stop!' she said. 'I have a message for you from Mrs Stockdale. Listen to what I tell you;' and she seemed to speak eagerly. '*You are to remember your promise.*'

Then I awakened. The morning sun was pouring in its light through the window. I got up and dressed myself. At first I thought my dream was simply the effect of circumstances. The familiar room, and my meditations the night before, had awakened in me former trains of thought. Even in sleep, my imagination was busy with the past; for impressions once made upon the mind, though forgotten, remain hidden away as it were in the storehouse of the memory, and may rise up before us again at the most unexpected moments.

But I must confess that this dream, fantastic as it was, strangely affected me. Old wounds will open afresh after they have been healed for years, and the vividness of my dream seemed to have stirred to their depths the feelings which time had calmed. I began to think of my promise to Fairy, and to ask myself, had I done all I might have done to keep it; and a vague impression began to take possession of me that I must visit Rathminster once more. I reasoned with myself that it would be useless, as well as painful to me to do so; but the feeling grew stronger, and I could not shake it off. At length, therefore, my time being at my disposal, I determined to yield to it; and so the fourth day after my arrival in Liverpool, found me again on my way to Rathminster.

It was about four o'clock in the afternoon when I reached the town. I noticed but few changes in the place itself—the great change was in the people—a change that twenty years is sure to work. The young were middle-aged; the middle-aged were old; the old were dead. I saw scarcely a face that I recognised. Scarce a soul remembered me. I was not known at the hotel, where even my name had been forgotten. I was not sorry at this. I had come to-day; I should be gone to-morrow. I scarcely wished to be recognised or remembered. After having had some refreshment, I strolled out along the streets. I gazed at the house where we had lived. I sauntered past the school-gates, and saw a few of the boarders playing in the old ball-court. I then walked slowly along the road past the castle; the rooks were busy with their nests in the fine old trees, and flights of jackdaws were circling as they used to do round the ivy-covered

walls of the old ruin. I had almost unconsciously taken the road which passed Rathminster churchyard, and before I knew, I found myself at the gate. Then I thought that I would once more walk along the path, and once more gaze upon the spot where I had parted from her. In bitterness of spirit I followed the path through the fields on and on, till at last I came out upon the high-road. On finding myself so near Stockdale's house, I walked on a hundred yards or so until I came opposite it. I deemed that there was little danger of meeting Stockdale, and doubted whether even passing me casually he would recognise me. It was a lovely evening, and there was a delicious spring-like odour in the air. The hedgerows were all out in leaf, and the green on them and on the trees was still in its first delicate freshness. The little birds were fully engaged in their domestic concerns; and the busy chatter of the distant rookery was just audible in the moments when all other sounds were hushed.

There was no one in Stockdale's garden, nor indeed about the cottage, so far as I could see. The door was closed, and the blinds were down in the lower windows. As no one seemed near, I sat down upon the parapet of the little bridge. The moment I had seen the house, I had been struck by its changed aspect. Formerly, everything about it had been so neat and well kept; now, there was everywhere an air of neglect and desolation. The garden was a mass of weeds; the box borders of the flower-beds had grown up almost into shrubs, and were the only tokens of where the walks had been. In the centre of the garden, from the little gate that opened on the road, to the door of the house, there was an ungravelled pathway trodden amongst the weeds. The house too seemed utterly uncared for. The rustic porch was in a tottering condition. The creepers which had covered the front of the house were gone; here and there, a portion of the decaying trellis-work remained hanging to the wall; and cracked and broken panes were to be seen in almost every window. I began to wonder what had become of Stockdale. Was he dead, or had he left the country, or sold his farm? Although it was so long since I had seen or heard of him, yet I had come to Rathminster expecting somehow to find things just as I had left them; and it had not even occurred to me to make any inquiries in the town. Had I then come back after twenty years just to see the house falling into ruin, and to hear, perhaps, that the owner had been long dead?

Still, my thoughts were not so wholly engrossed with suppositions as to Stockdale and his misfortunes, as to make me forget that I had come to Rathminster determined to do one thing, if it were possible to be done—and that was, *to keep my promise to Fairy*. So powerfully had my recent dream impressed this duty upon my mind, that I could not help upbraiding myself for so long delaying its execution. But now, sitting on the parapet of the bridge in view of the cottage where she had lived, I made a firm resolve with myself that the duty should be postponed no longer. I felt impelled towards it by a mysterious something within me which I am not yet able to explain, even to myself.

Seeing that the long-forgotten figure of Dorothy Brien had played so conspicuous a part in my

dream, I naturally made some inquiries with regard to her. It appeared that shortly after Mrs Stockdale's death, she had left the service of young Stockdale—though for many years she had served him and his family before him—and gone away, it was believed to America. At all events, she had not since been heard of, and must long ago be dead. This information further excited my curiosity as to how it came that she filled so large a place in my dream—a dream which had led me after so many years to seek to make up for my previous neglect of Fairy's last wish.

It would weary the reader were I to detail the various steps I took in order to get the sanction of the necessary authorities for the removal of her body from that solitary grave in Gortfern churchyard, where it had lain undisturbed all these years. Fortunately, Dr Burton, who had succeeded to the practice of our old medical attendant, his father, had not forgotten me, or who I was; and when I had stated to him the sacred purpose of my visit, he used every endeavour to enable me to carry out my wishes. From him, also, I learned that Stockdale a few weeks before had disappeared from the village, in order to escape the consequences of some action on the part of an exasperated creditor, and when he might return was not known. At all events, he was not in a position to raise any serious obstacle to my proposal, even if he were now so minded, for his life during many years had been a continued sinking from bad to worse. Poor in means, and degraded in character, he had gradually lost the respect of his neighbours—a silent, dark-minded man, who moved about like one who has the burden of some great crime lying heavy upon him.

At length we had completed our arrangements for the transference of the body of Mrs Stockdale to the Rathminster churchyard; and for this purpose Dr Burton and I set out one morning armed with the necessary authority, to be followed in an hour by a hearse that was to reconvey the body from Gortfern.

I shall never forget that morning. The air was mild and humid, with a soft mist veiling the distant landscape; and as we passed along that solitary road, which I had traversed with such bitter feelings twenty years before, the whole circumstances of that mournful period rose up before me in a kind of dreadful phantasmagoria. I saw in imagination my cousin Fairy—the woman I had loved so long and so deeply—lying dead under the silver fir on that New Year's morning; her removal to the cottage; my visit there, with Dorothy Brien once more telling me that there was death in the house; my useless expostulations with Stockdale; the funeral procession to Gortfern churchyard, and the consignment of Fairy's remains to the cold recesses of that moorland grave. Ah me! that sorrow should so print its impress upon our hearts!

When we arrived at Gortfern, we found the sexton and his assistant in readiness for their work, as also two representatives of the local trust that had the management of this old burying-place. We soon found the grave—though no tombstone marked the spot—and the melancholy work of disinterment began. I watched them, as the men worked downwards foot by foot through that soft, black, peaty mould, till I heard their implements

strike upon the lid, on which I had heard, as it were but yesterday, the dull echo of 'earth to earth' twenty years ago. The men worked with care; but somehow in the course of their operations, the lid of the coffin had been split from top to bottom; and when the chest was raised out of the grave, and set down upon the turf of the churchyard, to my horror the one half of the cover fell entirely away, partly revealing the remains which it inclosed.

I cannot express the mingled grief and consternation that filled my mind at this, which appeared to me to be nothing less than a violation of the sanctity of death. Had I been allowed to follow my first impulse, it would have been to order the immediate replacement of the lid, that no rude gaze should reach those dear remains. But Dr Burton gently took me by the arm, and stooping down, slightly raised the dank cloth that covered the face of the dead. What was my surprise to find that the countenance was almost unchanged! I still could trace the well-remembered features—it was 'as if she had not been dead a day.' I knelt down by her side, and for a short while gave way to the grief I could no longer suppress.

It was afterwards explained to me by Dr Burton, that this apparently miraculous preservation of the body was due to the strongly antiseptic properties of the peaty soil in which it had been interred; although he had never in his experience seen a case in which the preservation had been so marvellously complete.

After allowing me for a few minutes to expend my grief, the worthy doctor was approaching as if to raise me, when we heard a voice behind us exclaim in tones of violent passion: 'Who has done this? By whose orders was this grave opened?'

I started to my feet, and there within a few yards of me stood Robert Stockdale! His eyes were gleaming like those of a fiend. He seemed like a man under the influence of strong drink; but it may only have been the wild excitement of his passionate nature. Since I had seen him last, he was more changed than she who had all these years been in her grave. Haggard and ghastly, with bloodshot eyes and deeply wrinkled forehead, he stood before me the very impersonation of an evil life.

I was about to advance and speak, when we observed the sexton, who had been busying himself in replacing the broken lid, lift a small packet out of the coffin, which he handed to Dr Burton. The packet was done up in several thick folds of cloth; and as he carefully unrolled these, all eyes were riveted upon him—even those of Stockdale, who had now approached, and stood looking on as if horror-stricken. The removal of the last fold of the cloth discovered a small volume—a pocket Testament—Fairy's Testament! I had given it to her as a keepsake, on my first visit to Rathminster, after I left home. As Dr Burton unclasped it, there fell from between the leaves a scrap of paper, which he instantly took up, and read aloud. I shall never forget the words it contained: they sounded in my ears like what they were—a message from the dead.

'I, Dorothy Brien, write this paper. I have promised to Mr Stockdale, my master, for the sake

of his good father and mother I so long served, never to tell what I know of this dreadful crime. But I will place this in my dear mistress's coffin when there is no one to see me, and God may reveal the truth some day. My mistress did not take away her own life—she was murdered by her husband. In the middle of the night, he stunned her with a blow; and I saw him carry the senseless body down-stairs. God and his own conscience only can tell what happened then. But she is as innocent of self-destruction as the babe unborn. I do not know how I shall live under the burden of what I know. But heaven may bring it to light some day, when I pray God pardon me for this great crime of concealment. But I cannot disgrace the son of parents who were so kind to me. God forgive me for my great sin.

DOROTHY BRIEN.'

As Dr Burton concluded the reading of this awful revelation—the revelation of a secret which the grave had kept so long—Stockdale turned as if to rush from our presence; but with a deep groan he staggered, and fell to the ground, where he lay for a time like a dead man. The doctor at once ordered the parish authorities present to see to his safe custody; and that night he was consigned on a charge of murder to Rathminster jail. For some hours, as I afterwards learned, he remained in a kind of stupor, out of which condition he gradually passed into a state bordering on frenzy, so much so, that he had to be closely watched by those in charge of him. A little after midnight, his excitement subsided, and he was left apparently sunk in slumber. In the morning, when his cell-door was opened, it was found that the wretched man had passed from the power of human justice to that which is beyond.

I need not prolong my story. The body of Fairy was reverently conveyed from Gortfern to Rathminster, and laid beside that of her mother. *I had kept my promise.*

A PLAY UPON SURNAMES.

A CITY directory, however useful for business purposes and in its own special sphere, is hardly likely to be regarded by the general reader as a particularly lively or attractive volume. Yet to the curious, who will take the pains to analyse its contents, such a compendium is capable of yielding an astonishing amount of information and amusement. The study of names, whether of persons, places, or things, even in a superficial and unscientific manner, can scarcely fail to afford some measure of interest; while, with a little whimsical fancy, it may be rendered much more entertaining than one might readily suppose. From the directory of any large town, one may easily collect an array of the oddest, most fantastic, and seemingly most inexplicable names, many of which, probably, he has never heard of before; and if these be skilfully marshalled and reviewed, with the object of bringing into stronger relief their peculiarities and relationships, the effect is at once striking, grotesque and instructive. Without going farther afield than the Scottish capital, we may extract from the Edinburgh Directory a collection of

such curiosities as will amply serve our present purpose.

Let it be observed, in the outset, how many familiar surnames have been borrowed from the elements, the geographical features and products of the earth, the animal and vegetable kingdom; from the names of places, the various occupations of mankind, our conditions and characteristics, and even from our handiwork. Numerous experiments, such as the following, might be made to illustrate these peculiarities of our nomenclature. Let us try, for example, to compose a landscape by using a few of such surnames as have been derived from the geographical features of the country. There is no lack of material, and we may at once conjure up a scene of the most extensive and variegated description. Before us lie Hill and Dale, Wood and Forrest, Lake, Loch, Shore and Isles; Burns, Brooks and Firths; Glen, Garden, Grove, Corrie and Plain, Park and Ford; while the prospect may be further diversified by a House, an Abbey, a Church or Kirk, Greenfields, Bridges, Dykes, Gates, and, if you like, Fountains and even Cairns. To introduce a few more curiosities in connection with our picture, it may be observed that the scene will be all the more beautiful if viewed in Fairweather and not in Rainy, when the Waters would probably be in Flood, overflowing their Banks, and making Pooles in the Field by the Burnside; and it is better seen on a Summers day than in Winter, when its charms might be shrouded in Frost and Snow or obscured in Fog.

From inanimate nature we also obtain such surnames as Slate, Flint, Brass, Steel, Irons (with their concomitant Rust), Silver and Diamond. The vegetable world also contributes. Among trees there are Rowan, Myrtle and Oakes, from which we have a Bough, a Twigg, and even the Shade they afford. From the kitchen-garden we get Beet and Leek; while among flowers we have the Rose, the Lillie, the Gowan, the Primrose and the Hyacinthe. Of fruits there are the Peach, the Berry; and, what must be interesting to botanists, a Newberry. In close connection with the foregoing are the Bird, the Bee, and the Grubb. Of surnames identified with the names of places, there is an almost endless variety. The following may be enumerated: Scotland, Ireland, Wales, Brittain, Fife, Cromarty, Dingwall, Cornwall, Annandale, Paris, Glasgow, Carlisle, Paisley, Leith, Carstairs, Brechin, Coldstream, Kelso, Selkirk, Melrose, Galloway, Lockerbie, Dunse, Corstorphine, Berwick, Bathgate, Beith. There are also Townsend, Street, Lane, and Cross.

The trades and professions are hardly less numerously represented. To select only a few of the more uncommon, we may mention Bishop, Preacher and Teacher; Sheriff, Judge and Constable; Farmer, Carter and Harrower; Joiner and Sawyer; Capper, Barber and Cutler; Piper and Fidler, the latter with his Bow; the Drover with his Herd; the Shepherd with his Crooke;

the Hunter with his Horn; the Player, for whom there is a Stage; the Officer on the March, with his Armour, Shields, Spears, Sword and Gun, and in front of him the Cannon; the Cook, who is of course provided with a Kitchen and an abundant supply of Potts, Kettles, and Ovens; the Diver with his Bell; the Painter with his stock-in-trade of colours—Black, White, Green, Brown, Gray, Dun and Blues, and many other worthies who will doubtless occur to the Reader. It is interesting to find that the names and professions of individuals occasionally harmonise. You may find a Taylor who is a member of the sartorial brotherhood, a Wright who wields the saw and hammer, a Slater who is a slater, and a Mercer who is a mercer; and if there be anything in a name, what could be more suitable than Manners for a draper, or Gentle for a dentist? For a dairy-keeper, however, Brooks may be thought rather suggestive, and Frost may appear somewhat frigid and repelling for a landlady.

Beasts and birds have lent their names to a numerous section of the human family. In our streets we may see Lyon and Lamb, Bullock, Cowe and Hog, Hart, Kidd and Fawns, Cob and Collie, Fox and Hare. But the feathered tribe comes much more prominently to the front. There are Eagle, Swan, Heron, Peacock, Drake, Woodcock, Crow (whose Caw is not denied us), Dove, Parrot, Starling, Martin, Swallow, Nightingale, Finch, Robin and Wren. Of Fish, for which there is a Pond, we have Salmon, Pike, Eeles, Roach and Crabb, some of which a Fisher is attempting to Hook, using a Cockle for bait. He has, however, to Wade, and has long to Waite for a bite.

Coming to names obviously derived from men's own conditions, relationships and characteristics, we find such surnames as Child, Suckling, Bairnes, Fairbairns, Boys, Girdle, Batchelor, Mann, Gentleman, Husband, Bairnsfather, Cousin and Friend. Royalty and aristocracy are represented by King, Duke, Earl, Noble and Knight. Then we have Laird and Tenant, and another who is Landless. And if names afford any criterion of personal appearance, constitution, or temperament, we can have our tastes admirably suited in the choice of companions. There are Young and Old, High and Low, Long and Short, Stout, Thin, Slight, Large, Small and Little; Strong and Doughty, Smart, Sharp, Tough and Rough; Wise and Simple, Gentle and Meek, Good and Best. What a happy time we should have in the company of Messrs Jolly, Blyth, Merry and Gay! Goodfellow, Playfair, Wiseman, Virtue, Peace and Caution would also be desirable guests; but Gandy, Pryde, Gossip, Cross, and Craven should not be admitted. Messrs Glass and Chrystal should be easily seen through, and Mr Helm should be a useful man for steering one out of a difficulty. We should of course expect Dear, Darling, and Love to be very affectionate people; and Swift, Speed, Trotter, Hurry, and Hastie should make excellent messengers. There are also a few names applying to different parts of the human body, as Bone, Legg, Shanks, Foot, Hair, Cruikshanks, Armstrong, Broadfoot, and Proudfoot.

Another class of curious surnames are those

called after more or less familiar articles, as household utensils and domestic necessities or luxuries. Some of these have already been mentioned in connection with the trades, but a large number remain, among which are Box, Broom, Fender, Buckle, Lock, Bolt, Barr, Comb and Key. The currency is represented by Cash, Money, Coyne, Crown, Dollar, Groat, Ducat and Penny; and in this group Cheape, Price, and Dearnness may be alluded to. Of measures there are Gill, Gallon, Peck and Bushell. Talking of measures suggests that Mr Dry would be much safer in the neighbourhood of Wells than within reach of Sherry or Porter; Mr Drinkwater, however, would not Touch a Beveridge that would Hurte him. In another department of measurements we have Miles, Furlong, Inch, and Inches.

These curiosities do not by any means exhaust our List. We have still More. We have Moon and Stars, the former on the Wane. We have East and West, the undiscovered Pole, and the very Air we breathe. Mythology gives us Griffin, and Fairie, whose exploits enliven the Page of many a Story which we have Read or Heard. It is pleasant to have the Smiles of Fortune, which engender Hope and encourage us to Work with a Will, in which case we can hardly Fail. We not unnaturally look askance at people who Crouch in a Corner, Mutter and Ogle, are Given to Howling, or behave in other Strangeways; and it seems Hard to believe that we have really in sober seriousness to call respectable neighbours by such names as Pagan, Lawless, Conquergood, Loose, and Cram, or by such extraordinary appellatives as Gamgee, Inskip, Shirtsinger, Spinks, Tuting, Caskey, Dishington, Dott, Groundwater, Dowdy, Twatt, and Grummett. None of these are Common, but there are many equally remarkable which time and space compel us to Omit. To bring this somewhat rambling medley to a close, we may state, that as we must Early on the Morrow resume our Daily task—not being so Luckie as to enjoy the Boon of a Holiday—we shall now lay Down our Penn and retire to Sleep, trusting that if we Dream, it shall be in our own humble Chambers.

RECOLLECTIONS OF A HIGHLAND CENSUS.

MY father was a well-to-do farmer in a Highland parish; and in the winter evenings, Peter M'Lauchlin used to be often at our house. Peter was a kind of local monarch in his way, and our parish was the kingdom over which he reigned with undisputed sovereignty. He combined in his particular person a variety of offices—approximately indeed to Mrs Malaprop's Cerberus, 'ten gentlemen rolled into one;' for he was school-master, session-clerk, inspector of poor, land-measurer; was present at all sales, marriages, and funerals; and indeed on all important occasions Peter was chief man. This was thirty years ago; but I remember him well; and the approaching census of 1881 brings one or two of his stories to my recollection.

When the census came to be taken in 1851, Peter, of course, was intrusted with the work to be done in our parish. Although its inhabitants were widely scattered, many families living in lonely glens and far apart, Peter knew them all, and therefore he was the fittest man possible

in the circumstances for the office. On the evening of that memorable day, as I can still remember, Peter paid us a visit. He knew my mother was hospitable, and he was fond of a chat with my father, and he liked his supper at our fireside. He was full of stories about the census papers; and having got a hearty supper, he began by telling us the story of what he called 'Old Ronaldson's Madness.' He began:

The first difficulty I experienced to-day was with Old Ronaldson. He was always a little queer, as old bachelors often are. Yesterday, as I left the census paper with him, he held the door in one hand while he took the paper from me with the other. I said I would call again for the paper. 'Ye needn't trouble yourself!' said he in a very ill-natured tone. 'I'll not be bothered with your papers.' However, I did not mind him much; for I thought when he discovered that the paper had nothing to do with taxes, he would feel more comfortable, and that he would fill it up properly.

The only person whom Old Ronaldson allows near him is Mrs Birnie; she goes and puts his house in order and arranges his washing; for Ronaldson, you know, is an old soldier; and although he has a temper, he is perfect in his dress, and most orderly in all his household arrangements. When Mrs Birnie went in her usual way to his house this morning, the old gentleman was up and dressed; but he was in a terrible temper, flurried and greatly agitated.

'Good-morning, sir,' said Mrs Birnie—I had the particular words from her own lips—'Good-morning,' said she; but Old Ronaldson, who was as a rule extremely polite to her, did not on this occasion reply. His agitation increased. He fumbled in his pockets; pulled out and in all the drawers of his desk; turned the contents of an old chest out on the floor—all the time accompanying his search with muttered imprecations, which at length broke out into a perfect storm.

Mrs Birnie had often seen Mr Ronaldson excited before, but she had never seen him in a state like this. At length he approached an old bookcase, and after looking earnestly about and behind it, he suddenly seized and pulled it towards him, when a lot of old papers fell on the floor, and a perfect cloud of dust filled the room. Mrs Birnie stood dumfounded. At length the old gentleman, covered with dust, and perspiring with his violent exertions, sat down on the corner of his bed, and in a most wretched tone of voice said: 'Oh, Mrs Birnie, don't be alarmed, but I've lost my senses!'

'I was just thinking as much myself,' said Mrs Birnie; and off she ran to my house at the top of her speed. 'Oh, Mr M'Lauchlin,' said she, 'come immediately—come this very minute; for Old Ronaldson's clean mad. He's tearing his hair, and cursing in a manner most awful to hear; and worse than that—he's begun to tear down the house about himself. O sir, come immediately, and get him put in a strait-jacket.'

Of course I at once sent for old Dr Macnab, and asked him to fetch a certificate for an insane person with him. Now, old Dr Macnab is a cautious and sensible man. His bald head and silvery hairs, his beautiful white neckcloth and shiny black coat, not to speak of his silver-headed cane and dignified manner, all combine to make

our doctor an authority in the parish. 'Ay, ay,' said the good doctor, when he met me; 'I always feared the worst about Mr Ronaldson. Not good for man to be alone. Sir, I always advised him to take a wife. Never would take my advice. You see the result, Mr M'Lauchlin. However, we must see the poor man.'

When we arrived, we found all as Mrs Birnie had said; indeed by this time matters had become worse and worse, and a goodly number of the neighbours were gathered. One old lady recommended that the barber should be sent for to shave Ronaldson's head. This was the less necessary, as his head, poor fellow, was already as bald and smooth as a ball of ivory. Another kind neighbour had brought in some brandy, and Old Ronaldson had taken several glasses, and pronounced it capital; which everybody said was a sure sign that 'he was coming to himself.' One of his tender-hearted neighbours, who had helped herself to a breakfast-cupful of this medicine, was shedding tears profusely; and as she kept rocking from side to side, nursing her elbows, she cried bitterly: 'Poor Mr Ronaldson's lost his senses, poor man—lost his senses!'

The instant Dr Macnab appeared, Old Ronaldson stepped forward, shook him warily by the hand, and said: 'I'm truly glad to see you, doctor. You will soon put it all right. I have only lost my senses—that's all! That's what these women are making all this confounded row about.'

'Let me feel your pulse,' said the doctor gently.

'Oh, nonsense, doctor,' cried Ronaldson—'nonsense; I've only lost my senses.' And made as if he would fly at the heap of drawers, dust, and rubbish which lay in the centre of the floor, and have it all raked out again.

'Oh, lost your senses, have you?' said the doctor with a bland smile. 'You'll soon get over that—that's a trifle.' But he deliberately pulled out his big gold repeater and held Ronaldson by the wrist.—'Just as I feared,' whispered the doctor to me, with much solemnity—'just as I feared. Pulse ninety-five, eye troubled, face flushed, much excitement,' &c. So there and then, Old Ronaldson was doomed.

I did not wish a painful scene; so, when I got my certificate signed by the doctor, I quietly slipped out, got a pair of horses and a close carriage, and asked Mr Ronaldson to meet me, if he felt able, at the inn in half an hour, as I felt sure a walk in the open air would do him good. He gladly fell in with this plan, and promised to be with me at noon certain.

As I have said, he is an old soldier, was an officer's servant in fact, and is a most tidy and punctual person. But old Mrs Birnie, careful soul, in her anxiety to keep matters right, made bad worse. Ronaldson, before going out, insisted on shaving; and Mrs Birnie had, with much thoughtfulness, the moment he began to make preparations for this, put his razors out of the way. Hereupon, he got worse and worse, stamped and stormed, and at last worked himself up into a terrible passion.

I grew tired waiting at the inn, and so returned, and found him in a sad state. When he saw me, he cried: 'Oh, Mr M'Lauchlin, the deil's in this house this day.'

'Very true,' said Mrs Birnie to me in an aside. 'You see, sir, he speaks sense—whiles.'

'Everything,' he went on, 'has gone against me this day; but,' said he, 'I'll get out of this if my beard never comes off.—Hand me my Wellington boots, Mrs Birnie. I hope you have not swallowed them too!'

The moment Ronaldson began to draw on his boot, affairs changed as if by magic. 'There!' cried he triumphantly—'there is that confounded paper of yours which has made all this row!—See, Mrs Birnie,' he exclaimed, flourishing my census paper in his hand; 'I've found my senses!'

'Oh,' cried the much affected widow, 'I am glad to hear it;' and in her ecstatic joy she rushed upon the old soldier, took his head to her bosom, and wept for very joy. I seized the opportune moment to beat a hasty retreat, and left the pair to congratulate each other upon the happy finding of Old Ronaldson's senses.

In the afternoon, I called up at Whinny Knowes, to get their schedule; and Mrs Cameron invited me to stay tea, telling me what a day they had had at the 'Whins' with the census papers.

'First of all,' said she, 'the master there'—pointing to her husband—'said seriously that every one must tell their ages, whether they were married or not, and whether they intended to be married, and the age and occupation of their sweethearts—in fact that every particular was to be mentioned. Now, Mr M'Lauchlin, our two servant-lasses are real nice girls; but save me! what a fluster this census has put them in. Janet has been ten years with us, and is a most superior woman, with good sense; but at this time she is the most distressed of the two. After family worship last night, she said she would like "a word o' the master himself." "All right," says John, with a slight twinkle in his eye.

'When they were by themselves, Janet stood with her Bible in her hand, and her eyes fixed on the point of her shoe. "Sir," said she, "I was three-an-thirty last birthday, though my neighbour Mary thinks I'm only eight-an-twenty. And as for Alexander"—this was the miller, Janet's reputed sweetheart—"he's never asked my age exactly; and so, if it's all the same, I would like you just to keep your thumb upon that. And then, as to whether he's to marry me or no, that depends on whether the factor gives him another lease of the mill. He says he'll take me at Martinmas coming if he gets the lease; but at the farthest, next Martinmas, whether or no!"

'Janet," said my husband, "you've stated the matter fairly; there is nothing more required."

'And John there,' continued Mrs Cameron, 'has made good use of Janet's census return. This very forenoon, Lady Menzies called to see us, as she often does. Said John to her Ladyship, says he: "He's a very good fellow, Alexander Christie the miller—a superior man. I'm sorry we are like to lose him for a neighbour!"

'I never heard of that," said her Ladyship. "He is a steady, honest man, and a good miller, I believe. I should be sorry to lose him on the estate. What is the cause of this?"

'Oh," replied my husband, "it seems the factor is not very willing to erect a house; and Alexander is not willing to have a new lease of the mill without one being built. Your Ladyship," added John, "can see, I daresay, what Alexander is after."

"O yes, I understand," said she, laughing. "I will try and keep the miller;" and off she set without another word. Down the burn-side she goes, and meets Alexander, with a bag of corn on his back, at the mill-door. When he had set it down, and was wiping the perspiration off his brow with the back of his hand, Lady Menzies said: "You are busy to-day, miller."

"Yes, my Lady," said he; "this is a busy time."

"I wonder," said her Ladyship, coming to the point at once, "that a fine young fellow like you does not settle down now and take a wife, and let me have the pleasure of seeing you as a tenant always with us."

"You wouldn't, my Lady," said the miller, "have me bring a bird before I had a cage to put it in. The factor grudges to build me a house; therefore I fear I must remove."

"Well, Christie," said her Ladyship with great glee, "you'll look out for the bird, and leave it to me to find the cage."

"It's a bargain, my Lady," said Alexander. "My father and my grandfather were millers here for mony a long year before me; and to tell the truth, I was reluctant to leave the auld place."

"In the course of the forenoon, the miller made an errand up the burn to the Whins, for some empty bags; and as we had already got an inkling of what had passed between him and Lady Menzies, I sent Janet to the barn to help him to look them out. When Janet returned, I saw she was a little flurried, and looked as if there was something she wished to say. In a little while—"Ma'am," says she to me, "I'm no to stop after Martinmas."

"No, Janet?" says I. "I am sorry to hear that. I'm sure I've no fault to find with you, and you have been a long time with us."

"I'm not going far away," said Janet with some pride; "the bairns will aye get a handful of groats when they come to see us!"

"So you see, Mr M'Lauchlin, what a change this census paper of yours has brought about."

"Ay, ay, good wife," said Whinny Knowes, laughing; "although you have lost a good servant, you must admit that I've managed to keep the miller!"

But I had a worse job with the Miss M'Farlanes, than Mrs Cameron had with Janet. They are three maiden ladies—sisters. It seems the one would not trust the other to see the census paper filled up; so they agreed to bring it to me to fill it in.

"Would you kindly fill in this census paper for us?" said Miss M'Farlane. "My sisters will look over, and give you their particulars by-and-by."

Now, Miss M'Farlane is a very nice lady; though Mrs Cameron tells me she has been calling very often at the manse since the minister lost his wife. Be that as it may, I said to her that I would be happy to fill up the paper; and asked her in the meantime to give me her own particulars. When it came to the age column, she played with her boot on the carpet, and drew the black ribbons of her silk bag through her fingers, and whispered: "You can say four-and-thirty, Mr M'Lauchlin." "All right, ma'am," says I; for I knew she was four-and-thirty at anyrate. Then Miss Susan came over—that's the second sister—really a handsome young creature, with fine ringlets and curls, though she is a little tender-

eyed and wears spectacles. Well, when we came to the age column, Miss Susan played with one of her ringlets, and looked in my face sweetly, and said: "Mr M'Lauchlin, what did Miss M'Farlane say? My sister, you know, is considerably older than I am—there was a brother between us."

"Quite so, my dear Miss Susan," said I; "but you see the bargain was that each of you was to state your own age."

"Well," said Miss Susan, still playing with her ringlets, "you can say—age, thirty-four years, Mr M'Lauchlin."

In a little while the youngest sister came in. "Miss M'Farlane," said she, "sent me over for the census paper."

"O no, my dear," says I; "I cannot part with the paper."

"Well, then," said she, "just enter my name too, Mr M'Lauchlin."

"Quite so. But tell me, Miss Robina, why did Miss M'Farlane not fill up the paper herself?"—for Miss Robina and I were always on very confidential terms.

"Oh," she replied, "there was a dispute over particulars; and Miss M'Farlane would not let my other sister see how old she was; and Miss Susan refused to state her age to Miss M'Farlane; and so, to end the quarrel, we agreed to ask you to be so kind as fill in the paper."

"Yes, yes, Miss Robina," said I; "that's quite satisfactory; and so, I'll fill in your name now, if you please."

"Yes," she uttered with a sigh. When we came to the age column—"Is it absolutely necessary," said she, "to fill in the age? Don't you think it is a most impertinent question to ask, Mr M'Lauchlin?"

"Tuts, it may be so to some folk; but to a sweet young creature like you, it cannot matter a button."

"Well," said Miss Robina.—"But now, Mr M'Lauchlin, I'm to tell you a great secret;" and she blushed as she slowly continued: "The minister comes sometimes to see us."

"I have noticed him rather more attentive in his visitations in your quarter of late, than usual, Miss Robina."

"Very well, Mr M'Lauchlin; but you must not tease me just now. You know Miss M'Farlane is of opinion that he is in love with her; while Miss Susan thinks her taste for literature and her knowledge of geology, especially her pamphlet on the Old Red Sandstone and its fossils as confirming the Mosaic record, are all matters of great interest to Mr Fraser, and she fancies that he comes so frequently for the privilege of conversing with her. But," exclaims Miss Robina with a look of triumph, "look at that!" and she held in her hand a beautiful gold ring. "I have got that from the minister this very day!"

I congratulated her. She had been a favourite pupil of mine, and I was rather pleased with what happened. "But what," I asked her, "has all this to do with the census?"

"Oh, just this," continued Miss Robina. "I had no reason to conceal my age, as Mr Fraser knows it exactly, since he baptised me! He was a young creature then, only three-and-twenty; so that's just the difference between us."

"Nothing at all, Miss Robina," said I—"nothing at all; not worth mentioning."

'In this changeful and passing world,' said Miss Robina, 'three-and-twenty years are not much after all, Mr M'Lauchlin?'

'Much!' said I. 'Tuts, my dear, it's nothing—just indeed what should be.'

'I was just thirty-four last birthday, Mr M'Lauchlin,' said Miss Robina; 'and the minister said the last time he called that no young lady should take the cares and responsibilities of a household upon herself till she was—well, eight-and-twenty; and he added that thirty-four was late enough.'

'The minister, my dear,' said I, 'is a man of sense.'

So thus were the Miss M'Farlanes' census schedules filled up; and if ever some one in search of the Curiosities of the Census should come across it, he may think it strange enough, for he will find that the three sisters M'Farlane are all *as year's bairns*!

THE MONTH.

SCIENCE AND ARTS.

WE have before alluded to the invention by Professor Graham Bell of the Photophone, an instrument by which sound is carried from one place to another by the action of a beam of light. Since our remarks were published, the inventor has, in a lecture before the Society of Arts, fully described the instrument, and has also detailed experiments of a very curious nature which were made during the researches connected with it.

The commercial success which has attended the undertaking of several railway Companies to supply Londoners with sea-water for their morning baths, has been instrumental in reviving the long-talked of scheme for carrying the same prized liquid to the Metropolis by means of pipes. A Bill is to be shortly brought before parliament to obtain powers to erect the necessary works for the purpose between London and Lancing, at which latter place the ocean is to be tapped.

Some experiments were lately carried out at Woolwich with the object of ascertaining the causes which lead to the accidental explosion of blasting charges in quarries and mines, from which such lamentable consequences so often ensue. Various charges of gunpowder were submitted to the most violent mechanical treatment without in any case leading to ignition. It is curious to learn that while these experiments were proceeding with such negative results, that which could not be accomplished by art, was produced by accident in the rocket factory hard by. A rocket in course of loading under pressure suddenly exploded without any visible cause. Further experiments may possibly lead to some elucidation of these apparently spontaneous explosions, but at present they are wrapped in mystery.

The diving system of Mr H. A. Fleuss, to which we directed attention some time ago, was, last December, put to a severe test at the Severn tunnel works. These works had for some time been flooded, owing to the occurrence of local springs which it was found impossible to check. In a subway or heading which was driven beneath the river, an iron door had been placed at a distance of ten hundred and twenty feet from the main shaft on the river-bank. By some oversight this door had—before the flooding occurred—been left open; and it was found impossible, with the

most powerful pumps, to gain upon the water unless this door could by some means be shut. The ordinary diving apparatus failed to achieve this, on account of the great length of air-pipe the diver was obliged to drag behind him. Mr Fleuss was then called upon to employ his apparatus, which it will be remembered is quite independent of any air-tube or other connection with *terra firma*. The door was by this means closed; and the water was speedily reduced several feet.

It may be mentioned that the Fleuss apparatus has undergone several modifications since our account of it was published. It now differs outwardly from the ordinary diving-dress only in the addition of a knapsack, which contains both the filtering arrangement and the supply of compressed oxygen. This alteration at once reduces the bulk of the dress, and what is more important, renders the system easy of application to any ordinary diving-costume. By the use of a mask to protect the eyes and to furnish a connection by means of flexible tubes between the mouth and the knapsack, the arrangement at once becomes applicable for use in mines or other places where noxious gases abound. For the rescue of persons from fires, or of miners after an explosion, this modification of the apparatus has been devised; and it, and the lamp which accompanies it, formed the subject of a paper read by Mr Huxham before the South Wales Institute of Engineers. The lamp is a limelight, and is fed by a supply of compressed oxygen contained in a receptacle at its base. It will give a brilliant light for many hours either under water or in the most polluted atmosphere. Detailed particulars concerning the apparatus may be had by applying to Messrs Fleuss, 110 Cannon Street, London, or St Ann's Works, Bridgeton, Glasgow.

Perhaps no atmosphere which is breathable is more polluted than that of the metropolis when a real London fog is hanging its pall over the streets of the great city. And although Mr Fleuss does not offer his help in this direction, it is satisfactory to note that many people are endeavouring to find means, and are offering suggestions, to remedy the evil. The matter is not only of interest to dwellers in London, but must affect in time the inhabitants of all large cities which are rapidly increasing their area with their population. Even bright and beautiful Paris is beginning to cultivate fogs of the London type, which fogs are attributed to the gradual substitution of coal as domestic fuel, since the wood-supply has commenced to fail.

A few centuries ago, the citizens of London petitioned parliament to forbid the use of coal 'on account of its stench;' but as time went on, the available wood was all consumed, and the people were glad enough to fall back upon coal with all its inconveniences. The lieges might now with much greater insistence urge that coal is the parent of worse evils than those which affect the olfactory sense; for they could point to the death returns, and prove that these are greatly augmented by the occurrence of those smoke-fogs directly due to the fuel which we burn. The remedies proposed are many in number, and amongst the most worthy of consideration are those which recommend the employment of gas or coke fires, or of smokeless coal. Dr Siemens

—whose name is better known in connection with electrical science—has proposed the use of a special form of stove which burns coke, or anthracite, aided by the application of gas-jets beneath the fuel. This form of stove has the appearance of an open coal-fire, and gives out more heat than that emblem of English comfort. It may be described briefly as a stove with a bottom plate of copper, riveted to a plate of the same metal which forms the back of the grate. A gas-pipe pierced with holes is fitted behind the lowest bar of the grate, and the upper part is filled with lumps of fuel. By an ingenious arrangement, a current of hot air is urged upon the gas-flames, and their heating properties are thereby much increased. Dr Siemens has not patented his ideas, but has published them *pro bono publico*. The figures which he gives representing the results of continued trials, in which gas and fuel were rigorously measured, prove at once that the new stove is economical as well as efficient. It is to be feared, however, that these ingenious devices will be, as we pointed out in a recent article on the subject, in a great measure rendered useless so long as manufacturers refrain from consuming their own smoke.

A namesake of Dr Siemens, at Vienna, has invented a new form of gas-lamp, in which the products of combustion are made to heat the air subsequently supplied to the burner. The ultimate products are said to be free from all vitiating properties, and the light given to be double or triple that of the best existing burners.

Our readers are probably aware that a rule exists that our criminals must have their photographs taken by the authorities, as a means of future identification. This plan has been further extended by an order from the Home Office, that the hands that commit the mischief should also become models for the photographer, in order that the marks of different kinds of employment may furnish additional evidence of identity. By a curious oversight, however, the prisoners are to be submitted to the camera with their hands crossed on the breast, by which means the palms of the hands are hidden. Mr Woodbury, the eminent photographer, has pointed out that if the palm of the hand were photographed in a strong side-light, so that its ridges and furrows were clearly defined, such a picture would form a map by which any hand could be at once recognised—it being certain that no two people agree in the configuration of these manual surface-markings.

It is said that the Chinese have for many years been alive to the foregoing fact; and in the absence of photography, have obtained impressions in a much more simple manner, by requiring their criminals to smear their fingers with greasy ink, and then to impress them upon paper. It is stated that twenty years of life make no sensible difference in the character of these skin furrows. A correspondent in *Nature* points to some experiences of their efficacy in detecting evil-doers which have come under his observation. In one case, the mark of a sooty finger on a white wall was sufficient to indicate a trespasser; whilst a greasy finger-mark on a bottle pointed to the last person who had illicitly quenched his thirst. This writer remarks that the Tichborne case would never have assumed the dimensions which it did if the real Roger had left behind him a

signature or thumb-mark of this nature. We may mention that in the East, illiterate persons often subscribe documents by dipping their finger in the inkpot and then marking the paper; but such an impress leaves no such permanent record of the skin furrows as that which is secured under the Chinese system.

A suggestion has been made to light mines by means of an endless band covered with Balmain's luminous paint. This band would pass from the top to the bottom of the shaft, and every part of it would in turn be submitted to daylight, which it would absorb and carry down to the depths of the mine. The proposal is ingenious, but hardly practicable. In connection with this subject, we may mention that a London photographer has found that when one of the constituents of this paint is incorporated with a sensitive emulsion for the preparation of dry plates, the rapidity of such plates is much enhanced. But a difficulty occurs in protecting them from the effects of their own luminosity.

The *Phylloxera*—that dreaded insect which has been such an enemy to the vineyards of France—has at length been met with an antidote which is likely to reduce its depredations to very narrow limits, if not to stamp it out entirely. In Great Britain, where vineries are only possible under glass, we give little heed to the ravages of this insect pest, although it may be noted that it is by no means unknown here. But in France—where thousands of acres are devoted to wine-producing, and where the revenue is greatly dependent upon that species of industry—the *Phylloxera* is a scourge as dreaded as the cattle-plague is by us. Its ravages have increased year by year from one department to another, until it has become evident that something must be done. The French government, after the manner of governing bodies, were niggardly in their grants towards the scientific solution of the problem, and what has been done seems to be principally due to private enterprise. A prize of three hundred thousand francs was offered some years ago for an insecticide which would destroy the parasite; and this offer led, as might be expected, to the trial of nearly every substance which can be found in a chemist's shop. Later on, Commissions and Vigilance Committees were appointed in the different departments to watch the progress of the pest and the effect of the remedies applied. The most effectual of these remedies seemed to be carbon disulphide; but its danger to human life counteracted the advantages otherwise gained. M. Dumas suggested its use in combination with potash, by which addition it not only represents a valuable manure, but also an effectual check on the *Phylloxera*. By the use of this new agent, the wholesome light wines of France will, it is hoped, be no longer subject to the plague which threatened their extinction.

Electricity as a light-producer seems at last to have passed from the experimental to the practical stage. We daily hear of fresh applications which have been found for it. In London, in addition to the brilliant display on the Thames Embankment and in many of the railway stations, three large districts are to be lighted by three different systems, so that their respective merits may be gauged. One of the faces of the huge clock at Westminster has recently been illuminated by the light, and its brilliance affords a great contrast to

its yellow gas-lit fellows. In the House of Commons itself, the Brush system of electric lighting is to be put upon its trial. Perhaps this system has been chosen because the lamps will burn without attention for twenty hours or so—a necessary provision in the case of debates of unusual length.

Mr Edison's celebrated cardboard lamp—which some time ago had such a depressing effect upon gas shares—has lately been put into the shade by the experiments of Mr Swan of Newcastle-on-Tyne, who claims to have gone twenty years ago over the same ground as that which has lately been traversed by the American inventor. It is in the direction of these experiments that public attention will now be concentrated, for they deal with the question of carrying the illuminating agent into our private houses. Mr Swan's lamp resembles Edison's in that it is worked upon what is popularly known as the incandescent system. This system is based upon the fact, that certain bodies offer resistance to the passage of the electric current, a resistance which is manifested by their attaining a white-heat. Carbon represents one of these bodies; and if it assumes the incandescent state in the presence of air, it naturally combines with the oxygen, as in the case of any other combustible, and will speedily fall to pieces. Schemes for inclosing such an incandescent body in a glass globe exhausted of air, have been suggested and patented in past years by the dozen. But they have all failed, not from any flaw in theory, but because the means of securing any approach to a perfect vacuum were not known until quite recently.

The invention of the Sprengel air-pump has altered the condition of affairs, and the vacuum globe inclosing a carbon filament promises, in Mr Swan's hands, to become a successful means of finding us an efficient electric lamp for domestic purposes. The lamp itself consists of a glass vessel somewhat like an inverted Florence oil-flask. In the centre of the bulb is a filament of carbon supported between two platinum wires, which, carried to the lower part of the lamp, form conductors of the electric current. This carbon filament, which is little thicker than a hair, is made by some secret process which embodies the gist of Mr Swan's patent. It is about three inches long, and weighs less than a grain, and is so dense that it resembles an attenuated steel wire more than the cardboard cinder of which it is really composed. Each lamp gives out a light of from thirty to fifty standard candles; and on a recent occasion, the inventor showed three dozen of them in action; the energy absorbed in driving the dynamo machine from which the current was derived being four-horse power. It has been further proved that, by means of a gas-engine to give the necessary motion to the machine feeding the lamps, a room can be lighted with double the brilliance and half the expenditure of gas used in the ordinary way. Such facts entitle us to hope that the day when our houses will be lighted by the aid of the new medium, cannot be far distant.

In the meantime, the holders of gas shares need not fear any immediate depreciation of their property. The introduction of gas did not stamp out the candle manufacture, and we need not fear any worse result as regards gas from the intro-

duction of electricity. In Dr Siemens' stove we see a new and extensive use for gas; and the general advantages of cleanliness and economy in the use of gas-engines where a small amount of power is required, cause these motors to be in constant demand. In these and many other ways, the gas Companies will hold their own; but we trust, in common with everybody else, that when they acknowledge that their monopoly is no longer threatened, they will see their way to reduce their prices.

The curious arabesques produced on window-panes by frost have suggested to a French inventor a system of obtaining designs for printed stuffs by crystallisation. He has made experiments with solutions of the sulphates of zinc, copper, iron, alumina, and magnesia, with which plates of glass were covered, and then allowed to dry slowly at different temperatures. The crystals thus deposited form a great variety of fanciful figures, flowers, feathers, stars, &c. These may be fixed by the addition of albumen or gelatine. If copper plates are used, the designs thus obtained may also be made permanent by electrotyping. The great difficulty is to obtain continuous patterns to be reproduced on the cylinders used for printing; but that may be overcome by using cylindrical plates of copper, and turning them on their axes while the evaporation is going on. The crystallisation is, however, frequently irregular, and leaves blank spaces, which spoil the harmony of the design; but that defect will probably be overcome by experience. It is not certain that the method has yet been practically employed; but the idea is ingenious, and will no doubt be eventually turned to account.

A LOVE-SONG.

In the night-time, O beloved,
When the wind is in the pines,
And the corn-fields lie in darkness,
While one lonely planet shines,
In the pulsing of my heart's blood
There is music, for I hear,
Through the dark, Time's broad wings beating
Slowly, with the falling year.
Fall the leaf, and rise the tempest,
It is ever Spring with thee;
And the Winter of our wedding
Will be Summer-time to me.

When the leaf is sore and golden,
And the branches bare and white
With the rime of Winter, falling
In the low-lit Autumn night,
I am glad, as though the Spring-time
Shone o'er all the golden sky;
And I watch the light sand running
Through the hour-glass, merrily.

O beloved, when, above us,
Rise dark clouds of gathering snow,
And the keen, chill winds of Winter
From the whitening uplands blow,
All the long night, on my window,
Will the fairy fingers move,
Building for us bowers and grottoes,
Lit with morning lights of love.
Fall the leaf, and rise the tempest,
It is ever Spring with thee;
And the Winter of our wedding
Will be Summer-time to me.

D. J. M.

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